



ALL YOU NEED TO GROW.

April 6, 2010

Representative E. Nelson Cole, Co-Chair
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Transportation
NC House of Representatives
16 W. Jones St, Room 1218
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

Senator Steve Goss, Co-Chair
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Transportation
NC Senate
16 W. Jones St, Room 1028
Raleigh, NC 27601 - 2808

Dear Chairman Cole and Chairman Goss,

The mission of the Greater Winston Salem Chamber of Commerce is to promote a strong local economy, advance the interests of the business community and serve our members. Transportation related issues are a very important component to our economic development initiatives and our business community.

We believe in a strong, adequately funded transportation network. It is vitally important to economic development, keeping existing jobs and attracting new investment, as well as being essential to safety, environmental protections and enhancing our quality of life. We support market based solutions and investments necessary to adequately preserve and fund new capacity for our essential transportation infrastructure. The Piedmont Triad and, specifically the Winston-Salem metro area, is a major employment and economic engine for the region and state and as such must have the resources necessary to maintain and construct the transportation infrastructure required to keep these urban economic engines running efficiently and effectively.

The fact of the matter is the current Equity Formula is outdated and does not recognize the importance of the urban areas to the overall economic health of the state. Furthermore, the number of lane miles and bridges are more plentiful in the urban corridors and therefore they logically demand more resources to maintain.

For example, in Region 9, we have the Yadkin River Bridge. Currently, the four-lane segment of I-85, including the bridge over the Yadkin River, carries nearly 70,000 vehicles per day and is projected to increase to 112,000 by 2025. Trucks represent 24%

of all traffic on this portion of I-85. The existing bridge over the Yadkin River, built in 1955, has far exceeded its design lifespan and is currently classified as structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. This bridge has state and national significance.

However, under current law, one region is responsible for its replacement and reconstruction and will have to be paid for at the detriment to the other much needed and long delayed projects in the region: U-2925 (Salem Creek Parkway from MLK Jr Drive to Stadium Drive in W/S), U-2800 (Macy Grove Rd from Industrial Dr to Mountain St in Kernersville), U-2827B (US 421/Bus 40 from Church Street to Fourth Street in W/S). This will have a huge impact on our economic development initiatives, the cost to motorists and job creation, not only in Forsyth County, but the region.

Forsyth County is the 4th largest county in North Carolina and is projected to have 100,000 plus new residents within 20 years. However, due to the equity formula for transportation funds disbursement, we have consistently ranked near the bottom of funds received for maintenance and construction over the past 10 years as evidenced by our in-state ranking. Between 2000 and 2009, we ranked 97 out of 100 counties in the state in funds received. Additionally, the state is divided into 14 divisions. With one of the most populated counties in the state within its region, Division 9 ranked 10th in construction program allocation in the last Transportation Improvement Program from dollars that were based on this current formula. We simply cannot continue to meet the needs of our community with this current structure.

Forsyth County is both blessed and cursed by interstate highways. These interstates are important corridors for commerce and economic growth of the immediate area, the state and the southeast region. Unfortunately, the costs to maintain those corridors of regional and national significance (such as the Yadkin River Bridge/I-85 project) fall upon our one district. Simply put those maintenance obligations should not be included in the equity fund – there is nothing equitable about that type of obligation for a few to pay for what benefits a state and a region. If this continues the interstate maintenance obligations are such that it very well could eliminate funding for other area projects that are vital to our continued growth and prosperity. We recommend that interstate maintenance be handled by a separate fund outside of the equity formula calculations.

Thank you for your efforts in working to improve an outdated formula for distributing essential transportation dollars to support the economic engines of the state. The urban areas are in desperate need of additional monies to maintain and construct the transportation infrastructure required to keep our economy healthy and attract new jobs and investment into North Carolina.

Sincerely,



Jake Cashion
Director of Government Affairs
Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Senator Peter S. Brunstetter, NC Senate, 31st District
Senator Linda Garrou, NC Senate, 32nd District
Representative Larry Womble, NC House, 71st District
Representative Earline W. Parmon, NC House, 72nd District
Representative Larry Brown, NC House, 73rd District
Representative Dale Folwell, NC House 74th District
Representative William McGee, NC House 75th District
Mayor Allen Joines, City of Winston-Salem
Chairman David Plyler, Forsyth County Commissioner
Mr. Ralph Womble, NC Board of Transportation, Division 9